A

GENERAL VIEW

OF THE

DEPREDATIONS

COMMITTED ON

WEST-INDIA AND OTHER PROPERTY

IN

THE PORT OF LONDON;

THE PARTIAL REMEDIES

WHICH HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFULLY APPLIED IN

SUPPRESSING THESE EVILS,

AND

THE MEASURES PROPOSED

FOR RENDERING THEM PERMANENT AND EFFECTUAL.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS *General View*, with its Appendix, is printed in the form in which it now appears, *for the private consideration only* of a few very respectable Individuals: in the confident hope and expectation that from their known zeal for the Public good, joined to the importance of the case as now stated, and also from the share which several of them have already had in promoting the design of a River Police, and in endeavouring to extend its protecting influence *to the whole Trade of the Port of London—They may be stimulated to further exertions for the purpose of perfecting a measure of such evident utility.*

London, October 10, 1799.

CONTENTS.

CONTENTS.

The magnitude of the Plunder of Merchandize and Naval Stores on the River Thames.—The wonderful extent and value of the Floating Property, laden and unladen, in the Port of London in the course of a year.—Reasons assigned for the rise and progress of the excessive Pillage which had so long afflicted the Trade of the River Thames.—The modes pursued in committing Depredations as the result of a regular System, which had been established through the medium of various classes of Criminal Delinquents, denominated—River Pirates—Night Plunderers — Light Horsemen — Heavy Horsemen— Game Watermen — Game Lightermen —Mudlarks —Game Officers of the Revenue—And Copemen, or Receivers of Stolen Property.—The devices practised by each Class in carrying on their criminal designs.—General Observations on the extent of the Plunder and number of Individuals implicated in this Species of Criminality.—The effects of the Marine Police in checking these Depredations.—The advantages which have resulted to Trade and Revenue from the partial experiment which has been made.—The further benefits to be expected when, by apposite Legislative Regulations, the System of Protection is extended to the whole Trade of the River. —General Reflections arising from the Subject.—An Appendix, No. I. II. *and* III. *containing the Heads of the proposed Bill for compleating the designs, and explanatory Tables elucidating the importance of the measure proposed.*

THE

A GENERAL VIEW, &c.

THE immense depredations committed on every species of Commercial Property in the River Thames but particularly on West India produce, had long, been felt as a grievance of the greatest magnitude; exceedingly hurtful to the Commerce and Revenue of the port of London, and deeply affecting the interest of the Colonial Planters, as well as every description of Merchants and Ship-Owners concerned in the Trade of the River Thames.

A detail of the causes, which produced these extraordinary and extensive depredations, and the various means by which they were perpetrated; and also of the remedies which have been successfully applied, for the purpose of reducing within bounds, and keeping in check, this enormous and growing evil, cannot fail to be interesting; since it is certain, that previous to the establishment of the Marine Police System, in the Month of July 1798, the increase had been regular and progressive, while the easy manner in which this species of property was obtained, generated an accession of plunderers every year.

To those whose habits of life afford no opportunities of attending to subjects of this nature, the details which are now to be given will appear no less novel than extraordinary; and with respect to the

extent of the mischief, in some instances perhaps incredible. The West India Planters alone have estimated their losses by depredations upon the River and in the Warehouses at the enormous sum of £.250,000 a year: It cannot be unreasonable then to suppose, that the extent of the plunder on the other branches of Commerce, which form nearly 5-6th parts of the whole value of Imports and Exports, could not be less than £.250,000 more, making an aggregate upon the whole of Half a Million sterling!*

Surprising as this may appear at first view, yet when, by a cool investigation of the subject, it comes to be measured by the scale of the astonishing Commerce which centers in the port of London, (according to the annexed Abstract) and the vast extent of Floating Property moving constantly upon the River Thames, and the adjacent Wharfs and Quays subject to depredations; when by calculation it is also found, that the whole amount of the aggregate plunder, great and extensive as it appears to be, does not much exceed *three quarters per cent. on* the value of the whole property exposed to danger: the Reader will be reconciled to an estimate, which from the following elucidations, will ultimately appear by no means to be exaggerated.

* For a specific Estimate of the plunder on all branches of trade carried on to and from the port of, London, see "A Treatise on the Commerce and Police of the River Thames: with a summary View of the penal Laws relative to Shipping and Navigation:" (now in the press) by the Author of this Tract.

See also the Appendix to this Tract No. III.

ABST

OF THE *IMPORTS* INTO, AND THE *EX*

Made up from the Public Accounts for one year, ending the 5th day of
accounts, in which the price is estimated on data established many y
not rated at much above half the sum they now fetch, exclusive *of*
It is, therefore, to be understood that the following Estimate of Foreign
been possible to ascertain it, by the payment of the Convoy-duties, u
of the immense opulence and extent of the commerce of the Metrop
of the Country, which have been manifested in so eminent a degree,

From whence arrived.			
East Indies			
West Indies			
British Continental Colonies			
Africa and Cape of Good Hope			
Southern Fishery			
Greenland Fishery			
United States of America			
Mediterranean and Turkey			
Spain			
Portugal			
France			
Austrian Flanders			
Holland			
Germany			
Prussia			
Poland			
Sweden			
Denmark and Norway			
Russia			
Foreign Coasting	Including repeated Voyages.	Guernsey, Jersey and Alderney	
		Ireland	
British Coasting*		Coal Trade	
		English Coasting including Wales	
		Scotch Coasting	

* No rule being established, whereby the British Coasting trade can be valued, t
must amount to a certain moderate sum.—The aggregate of the whole is believed t

TRACT

HE *EXPORTS* FROM, THE *PORT OF LONDON*;

day of January, 1798 ; *but differing with regard to the value, from those many years ago, when the articles of commerce imported and exported were* sive *of duty.*

oreign Articles is made up according to the present value, *as nearly as it has uties, under the Act* 38 *Geo.* 3. *cap.* 76.—*It exhibits a very astonishing picture Metropolis ; and accounts in a very satisfactory manner for the vast resources degree, in the course of the present and former wars.*

	Number of vessels including repeated Voyages.	Average Tonnage.	Value of Goods Imported. £.	s.	d.	Value of Goods Exported. £.	s.	d.	Total Value of Goods imported and exported. £.	s.	d.
. . . . .	53	41,456	6,544,402	10	2	3,957,905	5	1	10,502,307	15	3
. . . . .	346	101,484	7,118,623	12	8	3,895,313	18	7	11,013,937	11	3
. . . . .	68	13,986	290,894	4	10	1,347,250	1	7	1,638,144	6	5
. . . . .	17	4,336	82,370	15	0	449,075	19	3	531,446	15	1
. . . . .	29	7,461	250,689	3	2	54	16	4	250,743	19	6
. . . . .	16	4,769	64,142	0	8	0	0	0	64,142	0	8
. . . . .	140	32,213	1,517,386	2	8	3,898,864	12	9	5,416,250	15	5
. . . . .	72	14,757	390,794	19	10	118,914	3	7	509,709	3	5
. . . . .	121	16,509	776,686	12	2	171,073	4	6	947,759	17	8
. . . . .	180	27,670	414,359	7	2	438,877	16	2	853,237	3	4
. . . . .	56	5,573	15,951	17	8	859,974	16	0	875,926	13	8
. . . . .	66	5,104	21,027	3	2	118,064	2	2	139,091	5	4
. . . . .	329	19,166	672,241	17	4	1,538,120	3	6	2,211,362	0	10
. . . . .	235	37,647	2,658,011	8	2	8,014,260	3	0	10,672,271	11	2
. . . . .	608	56,955	220,827	14	0	211,662	12	0	432,490	6	0
. . . . .	69	17,210	207,477	0	0	35,468	18	3	242,945	18	3
. . . . .	109	14,252	152,707	6	10	169,293	18	4	322,001	5	2
. . . . .	202	48,469	94,821	3	6	711,082	10	8	805,903	14	2
. . . . .	230	56,131	1,565,118	7	6	452,106	16	7	2,017,225	4	1
ney . . .	46	5,344	218,916	12	8	83,281	12	1	302,198	4	9
. . . . .	276	32,824	1,878,971	7	2	659,922	14	1	2,538,894	1	3
. . . . .	3676	650,000	1,700,000	0	0	10,000	0	0	1,710,000	0	0
Wales .	5816	500,000	3,900,000	0	0	2,200,000	0	0	6,100,000	0	0
. . . . .	684	60,000	200,000	0	0	300,000	0	0	500,000	0	0
	13,444	1,779,326	30,957,421	8	2	29,640,568	4	6	60,597,989	12	8

valued, the Estimate here given is grounded on the supposition, that the value of each cargo elieved to exceed the Estimate considerably.

RECAPITULATION.

	Ships and Vessels	Tonnage.
Foreign and Coasting Trade as stated in the foregoing Table	13,268	1,773,326

	£.	s.	d.
Value of Merchandize imported . .	30,957,421	8	2
Value of Merchandize exported	29,640,568	4	6
Total imported and exported	60,597,989	12	8
To which add the Local Trade within the limits of the Port, in the Upper and Lower Thames, and the River Lea	235,000	0	0

With a view to give the mind of the Reader a competent idea of the whole of the property upon the River Thames, which is exposed to hazard, the following estimate is added, viz :—

	£.	s.	d.
1. Value of the Hull, Tackle, Apparel and Stores of 2144 British, and Coasting vessels, trading to the port of London, without including, as above, the repeated voyages	8,825,000	0	0
2. Value of the Hull, Tackle, and Stores of 3507 Lighters, Barges, Punts, Hoys, Sloops, &c. employed in the Trade of the Thames, River Lea, &c.	350,000	0	0
3. Value of 3349 Wherries, Bumboats, and Peter Boats employed on the River, &c.	25,000	0	0
	70,032,989	12	8
4. Value of Goods, including Coals, exposed in Craft and upon the Quays, to the risque of pillage on an average each day in the year; (Exclusive of the Public Arsenals, Ships of War, Gunboats, Transports, and Hoys, for conveying Navy, Victualing, and Ordnance Stores, nearly equal to five Millions more) . .	235,000	0	0
General Total	70,267,989	12	8

Let the mind only contemplate this proud view of the Commerce of a Single River, unparalleled in point of extent and magnitude in the whole world; where 13,444 ships and vessels discharge and receive in the course of a year above three *Millions of Packages*,* many of which contain very valuable articles of merchandize, greatly exposed to depredations, not only from the criminal habits of many of the aquatic labourers and others who are employed, but from the temptations to plunder, arising from the confusion unavoidable in a crowded port, and the facilities afforded in the disposal of stolen property.—It will then be easily conceived, that the plunder must have been excessive, especially where from its analogy to smuggling, at least in the conceptions of those who were implicated; and from its gradual increase, the culprits seldom were restrained by a sense of the moral turpitude of the offence; and where for want of a *Marine Police* applicable to the object, no means existed whereby offenders could be detected on the River.†

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* See Appendix, No. III.

† While every thing connected with the present state of Europe, and the whole Commercial world, appears favourable for the accomplishment of the aggrandizement of the port of London, by the establishment of Docks (already in part adopted by the Legislature) and by a general Warehousing System, there is no opinion more erroneous and delusive than that which supposes that arrangements of this kind will supersede the necessity of a Police for the protection of the trade, and for the preservation of the public peace within these extensive repositories.

In what manner are from two to three thousand labourers, who must be frequently employed at the same time within these Docks, (and

those

The fact is, that the system of River depredations grew, and ramified as the Commerce of the Port of London advanced, until at length it assumed the different forms, and was conducted by the various classes of delinquents, whose nefarious practices are now to be explained under their respective heads.

1st. *River Pirates.*—This class was generally composed of the most desperate and depraved characters,

those too of a class that have been accustomed to plunder, and are not restrained by any sense of the turpitude of the action) to be over-awed and controlled, if no Police shall be conceived necessary?

The risque would be immense to commercial property; and pillage, in spite of the gates, and every precaution which could be taken, would probably be as extensive as it has been from the Warehouses, or from his Majesty's Dock Yards, where the want of an appropriate Police has been the cause of many abuses.

Police as recently exemplified, may be said to be a new science, not yet perfectly understood; it operates as a restraint of the most powerful kind upon all delinquents who would be restrained by nothing else. To the system of vigilance which pervades the criminal actions of labourers upon the River, joined to the imminent danger of detection, is to be attributed the general success of the Marine Police, in preventing depredations.

Wherever a proper Police attaches, good order and security will prevail; where it does not, confusion, irregularity, outrages, and crimes must be expected; wherever great bodies of aquatic labourers are collected together, risque of danger from turbulent behaviour, will be greater in proportion to the number of depraved characters, who, from being collected in one ſpot, may hatch mischief, and carry it into effect much easier in Docks than on the River. A Police only can counteract this; and to the same preventive system will the commerce of the Port be indebted for securing both the Docks and the Pool against Conflagration. In fine, under every circumstance where Property is exposed, a preventive Police must be resorted to, in order to be secure.

who followed aquatic pursuits. Their attention was principally directed to ships, vessels, and craft in the night, which appeared to be unprotected ; and well authenticated instances of their audacity are recounted, which strongly prove the necessity of a vigorous and energetic Police. Among many other nefarious exploits performed by these miscreants, the following may suffice to shew to what extent their daring and impudent conduct carried them.

An American vessel lying at East-lane Tier, was boarded in the night, while the Captain and crew were asleep, by a gang of River Pirates, who actually weighed the ship's anchor, and hoisted it into their boat with a complete new cable, with which they got clear off.—The Captain hearing a noise, came upon deck at the moment the villains had secured their booty, with which they actually rowed away in his presence, impudently telling him, they had taken away his anchor and cable, and bidding him good morning. Their resources afforded them means of immediate concealment. No Police then existed upon the River, and his property was never recovered.

A similar instance of atrocity occurred about the same time, where the bower anchor of a vessel from Guernsey was weighed, and, with the cable, plundered and carried off in the same manner.

Although only these two instances of extraordinary audacity are specified, others equally bold and daring could be adduced if the limits of this Tract would admit of it. When vessels first arrive in the river,

river, particularly those from the West Indies, they are generally very much lumbered. Ships in this situation were considered as the harvest of the River Pirates, with whom it was a general practice to cut away bags of *Cotton*, *Cordage*, *Spars*, *Oars*, and other articles from the quarter of the vessels, and to get clear off, even in the day time as well as in the night. Before a Police existed upon the River all classes of aquatic labourers having been themselves more or less implicated in the same species of criminality, generally connived at the delinquency of each other, and hence it followed, that few or none were detected while afloat, and hence the evil became so extensive.

It was frequently the practice of these River Pirates to go armed, and in sufficient force to resist, and even to act offensively if they met with opposition.—Their depredations were extensive among craft wherever valuable goods were to be found; but they diminished in number after the commencement of the war; and now since the establishment of the Marine Police they have almost totally disappeared.

On the return of peace, however, if a system of watchful energy is not maintained, these miscreants must be expected (as on former occasions on the termination of wars) to renew their iniquitous depredations in great force, as numbers of depraved characters may then be expected to be discharged from the Army and Navy.

2d. *Night Plunderers.*—These were composed chiefly of the most depraved class of watermen, who associated

ated together in gangs of four or five in number, for the purpose of committing depredations on the cargoes of lighters and other craft employed in conveying goods to the quays and wharfs. Their practice was to associate themselves with one or more of the watchmen who were employed to guard these lighters while cargoes were on board, and by the connivance of these faithless guardians of the night, to convey away in lug boats every portable article of merchandize, to which, through this medium, they often had too easy access.

These corrupt watchmen did not always permit the lighters under their own charge to be pillaged.—Their general practice was, to point out to the leader of the gang those lighters that were without any guard, and lay near their own, and which, on this account, might be easily plundered. An hour was fixed on for effecting the object in view. The Receiver (generally a man of some property) was applied to, to be in readiness at a certain hour before day-light to warehouse the goods. A lug boat was seized on for the purpose. The articles were removed into it out of the lighter, and conveyed to a landing-place nearest the warehouse of deposit. The watchmen in the streets leading to this warehouse were bribed to connive at the villainy, often under pretence that it was a smuggling transaction, and thus the object was effected.

In this precise manner was a quantity of ashes and hemp conveyed in 1798, to the house of an opulent Receiver.

Receiver. Several other cargoes of hemp, obtained in the same manner, were conveyed up the river, and afterwards carted in the day-time to the repositories of the purchaser, till by the vigilance of the Police Boats, a detection took place, and the whole scene of mischief was laid open.

This species of depredation went to a great extent, and when it was considered that the very men who were appointed to guard property in this situation were themselves associates in the criminality, and participated in the profit arising from the booty ; and that matters were so arranged as to secure the connivance of all those who were appointed to situations with a view to detect and apprehend delinquents; it ceases to be a matter of wonder, that the plunder in this particular line was excessive.

In many instances where goods could not be plundered through the connivance of watchmen, it was no uncommon thing to cut lighters adrift, and to follow them to a situation calculated to elude discovery where the pillage commenced. In this manner have whole lighter loads even of coals been discharged at obscure landing places upon the river, and carted away during the night.

Even the article of Tallow from Russia, which, from the unwieldiness of the packages, appears little liable to be an object of plunder, has not escaped the notice of these offenders: large quantities have been stolen, and an instance has been stated to the Author, where a lighter loaded with this article was cut from a ship in

the

the Pool, and found next morning with six large casks of tallow stolen, and two more broken open, and the chief part plundered and carried away. In short, while the river remained unprotected nothing escaped these marauders.

3*d. Light-Horsemen*, or Nightly Plunderers of West India ships.—This class of depredators for a long period of time had carried on their nefarious practices with impunity, and to an extent in point of value, that almost exceeds credibility; by which the West India planters and merchants sustained very serious and extensive losses.

The practice seems to have originated in a connection which was formed between the Mates of West India ships * and the criminal Receivers, residing near the river, who were accustomed to assail them under the pretence of purchasing what is called *sweepings*, or in other words, the spillings or drainings of sugars, which remained in the hold and between the decks after the cargo was discharged. These sweepings were claimed as a perquisite by a certain proportion of the Mates, contrary to the repeated and express rules established by the Committee of Merchants, who early saw the evils to which such indulgences would lead, and in vain attempted to prevent it. The connivance, however, of the Revenue officers became necessary to get these sweepings on

* It is not here meant to criminate all the Mates of ships in this trade; for a large proportion are known to be men worthy of the trust reposed in them.

shore, and the quantity of spillings were gradually increased year after year by fraudulent means, for the purpose of satisfying the rapacity of all whose assistance and collusion was found necessary to obtain the object in view.

The connection thus formed, and the necessary facilities obtained, from the sale of sweepings, recourse was at length had to the disposal of as much of the cargo as could be obtained by a licence to nightly plunderers, composed of Receivers, Coopers, Watermen, and Aquatic Labourers, who having made a previous agreement with the Mate and Revenue Officers, were permitted, on paying from thirty to fifty guineas, to come on board in the night,—to open as many hogsheads of sugar as were accessible,—and to plunder without controul. For this purpose, a certain number of bags dyed black, and which went under the appellation of *Black Strap*, were provided. —The Receivers, Coopers, Watermen, and Lumpers, went on board at the appointed time, for all these classes were necessary. The hogsheads of sugar and packages of coffee, &c. were opened ; the black bags were filled with the utmost expedition and carried to the Receivers, and again returned to be refilled until daylight, or the approach of it, stopped the pillage for a few hours. On the succeeding night the depredations were again renewed ; and thus, on many occasions, from fifteen to twenty hogsheads of sugar and a large quantity of coffee, and also in some instances rum (which was removed by means of a small

pump

pump called a Jigger, and filled into bladders with nozzels,) were plundered in a single ship, in addition to the excessive depredations which were committed in the same ships by the Lumpers or labourers who were employed during the day in the discharge of the cargo.—Instances have been adduced, and judicially proved, of various specific ships having been plundered in an excessive degree in this manner; and it has been estimated upon credible authority, that previous to the establishment of the Marine Police, above one-fifth of the whole fleet suffered by nightly plunder.—The ships subject to this species of depredation were generally known from the characters of the Mates or Revenue Officers who were on board, and were denominated *Game Ships*, where the aquatic labourers, called Lumpers, would on every occasion agree to work without wages, and even solicit their employers to be preferred on these terms, trusting to a general licence to plunder for their remuneration.

This nefarious traffic had long been reduced to a regular system. The mode of negociation necessary to obtain all the requisite advantages for carrying into execution these iniquitous designs, was not only perfectly understood, but in most cases, where new Officers were to be practised upon, a plan of seduction was resorted to which seldom failed to succeed, when one or more of the old practitioners in this species of criminality happened to be stationed in the ship.—In this particular line of aquatic depredations, (which certainly was the most mischievous,) scenes

of

of iniquity have been developed, which, from their extent and magnitude, could not have been credited had they stood on any other foundation than that of regular judicial proofs.

4th.—*Heavy Horſemen*, otherwise denominated Lumpers of the most criminal class, who generally selected ships where plunder was most accessible, either from the criminal connivance of the Mates and Revenue Officers, in permitting nightly plunder, or from the carelessness or inattention of these Officers.

This class, many of whom occasionally assisted in the depredations committed during the night, were exceedingly audacious and depraved. They generally went on board of West India ships, furniſhed with habiliments made on purpose to conceal sugar, coffee, cocoa, pimento, ginger, and other articles, which they conveyed on shore in great quantities, by means of an under waistcoat, containing pockets all round, denominated a *Jemie*; and also by providing long bags, pouches, and socks, which were tied to their legs and thighs under their trowsers.

It is a well-established fact, which does not admit even of the shadow of a doubt, that these miscreants during the discharge of what they called a *Game Ship*, have been accustomed to divide from three to four guineas a-piece every night from the produce of their plunder, independent of the hush-money paid to Officers and others, for conniving at their nefarious practices.

Long habituated to this species of depredation, they

they became at length so audacious, that it was found extremely difficult to controul them where a disposition existed to protect the cargo from pillage, and where no seduction had taken place.—And indeed, so adroit had this class of Lumpers become, that no ship escaped plunder in a certain degree, wherever they were employed, in spite of the greatest vigilance and attention on the part of many of the ship-masters.

5th. *Game Watermen*, so denominated from the circumstance of their having been known to hang upon West India ships under discharge for the whole of the day, in readiness to receive and instantly convey on shore *bags of sugar*, *coffee*, and *other articles*, pillaged by the Lumpers and others in the progress of the delivery of the cargo, by which they acquired a considerable booty; as they generally on such occasions were employed to dispose of the stolen articles, under pretence of their being a part of the private adventures of the crew, for which service they usually pocketed one moiety of the price obtained.—It was by such assistance that Mates, Boatswains, Carpenters, Seamen, and Ship Boys, have been seduced, and even taught to become plunderers and thieves, who would otherwise have remained honest and faithful to the trust reposed in them. Many of the Watermen of this class were accustomed to live in a style of expence by no means warranted, from the fair earnings of honest industry in the line of their profession.—An instance has been known of an apprentice lad in this line having kept both a mistress

and

and a riding horse out of the profits of his delinquency.

6th. *Game Lightermen.*—This class, which is composed of the working, or Journeymen Lightermen, who navigate the craft which convey West India produce and other merchandize from the ships to the quays, are, with some exceptions, extremely loose in their morals, and are ever ready to forward depredations by the purchase or concealment of articles of considerable value, until an opportunity offers of conveying the property on shore. Many of these Lightermen, previous to the establishment of the Marine Police, were in the constant habit of concealing in the lockers of their lighters, *sugar*, *coffee*, *pimento*, *ginger*, &c. which they received from Mates, and other persons on board of West India ships.—These lockers are generally secured by a padlock; they are calculated to hold and conceal considerable quantities of goods, whether stolen or smuggled, which were seldom taken out until after the discharge of the lighter, unless in certain instances where skiffs attended them.—When completely unladen, the practice has been to remove to the road where empty craft usually lies a-breast of the Custom-house quay, and then to carry away the stolen or smuggled articles—and it has not seldom happened that many of these Lightermen have, under pretence of watching their own lighters while laden at the quays, or in connivance with the Watchmen selected by themselves, actually plundered the goods under their charge

charge to a very considerable amount, without detection.

Nor does it appear that the nefarious practices of these Lightermen have been confined to West Indian produce alone. Their criminal designs were directed to almost every species of merchandize placed under their charge; and the tricks and devices to which they were accustomed to resort, clearly evinced that their plans for obtaining pillage had long been systematized, and that they seldom permitted any opportunity whereby they could profit by making free with property under their charge to escape their attention. As a proof that this assertion is well grounded, the following authenticated case, among others which could be detailed, is stated as an instance of the extreme rapacity of this class of men.—A Canada merchant, who had been accustomed to ship quantities of oil annually to the London market, finding (as indeed almost every merchant experiences) a constant and uniform deficiency in the quantity landed, greatly exceeding what could arise from common leakage, which his correspondents were quite unable to explain; having occasion to visit London, was resolved to see his cargo landed with his own eyes; so as, if possible, to develope a mystery heretofore inexplicable, and by which he had regularly lost a considerable sum for several years. Determined therefore to look sharp after his property, he was in attendance at the wharf in anxious expectation of a lighter which had been laden with his oil

on the preceding day; and which, for reasons that he could not comprehend, did not get up for many hours after the usual time.

On her arrival at the wharf, the proprietor was confounded to find the whole of his casks stowed in the lighter with their bungs downwards. Being convinced that this was the effect of design, he began now to discover one of the causes at least, of the great losses he had sustained; he therefore attended the discharge of the lighter until the whole of the casks were removed, when he perceived a great quantity of oil leaked out, and in the hold of the vessel, which the Lightermen had the effrontery to insist was their perquisite. The proprietor ordered casks to be brought, and filled no less than nine of them with the oil that had thus leaked out. He then ordered the ceiling of the lighter to be pulled up, and found between her timbers as much as filled five casks more; thus recovering from a single lighter-load of his property, no less than fourteen casks of oil, that, but for his attendance, would have been appropriated to the use of the Lightermen; who, after attempting to rob him of so valuable a property, complained very bitterly of his ill usage in taking it from them.

7th. *Mud-Larks*, so called from their being accustomed to prowl about, at low water, under the quarters of West India ships; (or at least that class which were denominated *Game*, these being mostly the objects of pillage;) under pretence of grubbing in the mud for *old ropes*, *iron*, and *coals*, &c. but whose

chief object, when in such situations, was to receive and conceal small bags of sugar, coffee, pimento, ginger, and other articles, and sometimes bladders containing rum, which they conveyed to such houses as they were directed, and for which services they generally received a share of the booty.—These auxiliaries in this species of pillage were considered as the lowest cast of thieves; but from a general knowledge of the Receivers in the vicinity, they frequently afforded considerable assistance to the Lumpers, Coopers and others, who collected plunder in the progress of the ships' delivery.

8*th. Revenue Officers.*—Notwithstanding the laudable severity of the Commissioners of his Majesty's Customs and Excise, in making examples of their inferior servants by immediate dismission, on proof made of any offence, or even neglect of duty; a certain class of these officers, who are denominated *Game*, have found means to promote pillage to a very extensive degree, not only in West India ships, but also in ships from the East Indies, and in every ship and vessel arriving and departing from the River Thames, of which it is to be lamented, that too many proofs have been adduced. This class of officers generally make a point of at least having the appearance of being punctual and regular in their attendance upon their duty, and by never being found absent by their superior officers obtain preferences, where such can be given, with respect to those particular

ticular ships which afford the best harvest, either from being under the charge of Mates or others, with whom they have had criminal transactions in former voyages, or from the cargo being of a nature calculated to afford a resource for plunder. They are also generally acquainted with the *Copemen* or Receivers, with whom and the other officers, after seducing the Mate, (if not already seduced) they negociate for the purchase of whatever can be plundered.

In those seasons of the year, when the crowded state of the port renders it necessary to have recourse to *extra* and *Glut Officers*, the general distress of this class of men, and the expectations most of them have formed of advantages by being placed on board ships of a certain description, render it an easy matter to seduce them; and by such means had every obstruction been removed to the perpetration of these excessive robberies, in all their ramifications, which had so long afflicted the port of London.*

* In the throng season of the year at least 500 inferior Customhouse officers, and about 300 Excisemen, are stationed on board of ships in the Port of London, besides 82 Customhouse watermen and 36 superior Officers who do duty on the River Thames. The fair allowance of the established Tide Officers may be from 50*l.* to 55*l.* a year. The preferable Officers having 3*s.* 6*d.* a day only when employed, are supposed to receive wages for 2-3ds. of the year; while the extra Officers, who have only 3*s.* a day, are not supposed to be employed above half the year; and the Glutmen not more than two months in the throngest part of the season.

Men in such situations having a trust committed to them of great magnitude and importance, in the protection of a Revenue amounting

9*th*. *Scuffle-Hunters*—so denominated probably from their resorting in numbers to the quays and wharfs where goods are discharging, under pretence of finding employment as labourers upon the landing places and in the warehouses, and from the circumstance, of *disputes* and *scuffles* arising about who should secure most plunder from broken packages. This class of men, who may fairly be considered as the very scum of society, frequently prowl about with long aprons, not so much with a view to obtain employment, as for the purpose of availing themselves of the confusion which the crowded state of the quays often exhibits, and the opportunity of obtaining plunder; in which object they have too frequently been successful, particularly when admitted into the warehouses as labourers, where they have found means to pilfer and carry away considerable quantities of sugar and other articles, in which they were not a little countenanced, by similar offences committed by journeymen coopers and others, who, under the colour of

ing to more than Seven Millions, and receiving wages inferior to common labourers, with pecuniary pressures upon them, arising from the wants in many instances of large families, assailed on all hands by temptations to connive at evil practices, as they relate both to the Revenue and the Individual—What can be expected from them?—Humanity, policy, and even justice pleads for an increase of salary, as the best means of preserving their morals and increasing the Revenue. Other Regulations through the medium of the Police System might be established, whereby their purity might be secured, and the Revenue eased of a considerable expence, by reducing the number employed at present, often in promoting mischievous instead of useful purposes.

sanctioned

sanctioned perquisites, abstract considerable quantities of sugar, thereby subjecting the proprietors to an accumulated loss: for, in addition to the first cost or price of the article, the duties which have been paid form no inconsiderable part of the ultimate value. It is only necessary to resort to the Journals of the House of Commons, and the Appendix to the Report of the Dock Committee in 1796, in order to be satisfied, that the plunder in the warehouses has been excessive. And if credit is to be given to the evidence then brought forward, and also to the affidavits of persons, who have worked for many years in the sugar warehouses, the loss sustained on an importation of 140,000* casks of sugar has not fallen much short of £.100,000 a year.†

* Sugar and Rum imported into the Port of London, from the 25th of March 1798 to the 25th of March 1799:

Islands.		Casks. Sugar.	Casks. Rum.
Jamaica	151	64,108	17,279
Antigua	14	5,258	715
St. Kitts	14	6,137	755
Barbadoes	17	7,961	65
Granadoes	18	6,806	443
Mountserat	6	2,742	568
Nevis	4	1,867	418
Dominica	14	4,152	400
St. Vincent	26	10,147	908
Tortola	3	789	109
Sundry Places, including captured Islands, &c.	106	32,793	2,271
	373	142,760	23,931

10th. *Copemen*

10th. *Copemen or Receivers of Stolen Commercial Property.*—This mischievous class of men may be considered as the chief movers and supporters of the extensive scene of iniquity which has been already developed and explained in the preceding pages. They were heretofore extremely numerous, and divided into various classes.‡ Those denominated *Copemen* formed the junto of wholesale dealers, who were accustomed to visit ships on their arrival, for the purpose of entering into contract with such Revenue Officers or Mates as they had formerly known or dealt with, and such others as they could by means of friendly officers seduce to their views.

Their negociations were carried on in a language and in terms peculiar to themselves; and commenced by settling the price of

Sand by which, in their cant language, was meant *Sugar.*
Beans - - - - - - or - - - - - - - - *Coffee.*
Pease - - - - - - - — - - - - *Pimento* or *Pepper.*
Vinegar - - - - - - - — - - *Rum* and *other Liquors.*
Malt - - - - - - — - - - - - - - *Tea.*

It was their custom to afford assistance wherever such articles were to be procured by providing *Black Straps*

† Independent of the exceſſive pillage by the labourers in the Warehouſes, which has been rendered but too evident from the detections of Offenders since the establishment of the Marine Police, the samples alone, which on an average are said to amount to 12*lb.* per hhd. (instead of 1½*lb.* per hhd. in conformity to the Regulations of the West India Merchants, of the 12th of June 1789,) make a net aggregate of 1,470,000 pounds of ſugar, which at 8*d.* per pound amount to 49,000*l.* a year!

‡ See the "Treatise on the Commerce and Police of the River Thames," for a particular account of these classes.

Straps (*i. e.* the long black bags already mentioned) to contain sugar, and calculated to stow easily in the bottom of boats, without being discovered on account of the colour. They also procured bladders with wooden nozels for the purpose of containing rum, brandy, geneva, and other liquors, and furnished boats to convey the plunder from the ships during the night.

Some of these Receivers had acquired considerable sums of money by their nefarious traffic, and were able to tempt and seduce those who would permit them to plunder the cargo, by administering to their wants by considerable advances of money which, however, rarely amounted to a moiety of the value of the goods obtained, and frequently not 1-4th part, particularly in the article of Coffee.

Other classes of Receivers purchased from the Lumpers, Coopers, &c. after the property was landed, and being generally engaged in business as small grocers or keepers of chandlers' shops, and old iron and junk warehouses, they were accustomed to protect it in its transit, from one criminal dealer to another, by means of false bills of parcels.

It would fill a volume to recount the various ramifications of this nefarious traffic, and the devices used to defeat Justice and elude the punishment of the Law.*

It

* For the purpose of defraying the expence of prosecutions for criminal offences upon the River Thames, and to raise a fund for suborning

It extended to almost every article imported into, and exported from, the port of London. But the dealings in stolen West India produce were by far the most extensive; at the same time it appears from recent investigation, that the *East India Company* and the *Russian* and *American Merchants*, as well as the Importers of *Timber*, *Ashes*, *Furs*, *Skins*, *Oil*, *Provisions* and *Corn*, were also considerable sufferers. The

suborning evidence, and employing counsel for higher crimes, and of paying the penalties under the Act of the 2d Geo. 3. cap. 28. commonly called the Bumboat Act; there existed a club composed of *River Plunderers* and *Lumpers*, *Coopers*, *Watermen*, and *Receivers*, (denominated *Light-Horsemen*, *Heavy-Horsemen*, and *Copes*,) from the funds of which the Law expences and the penalties incurred by members of the fraternity were paid. By these iniquitous means not a few notorious offenders escaped justice, while those who were convicted of penalties for misdemeanors escaped the punishment of imprisonment, and being thus screened from justice the culprits (previous to the establishment of the Marine Police System) returned to their evil practices without the least apprehension of any other inconvenience than the payment of a fine of 40*s*. defrayed by the Club. The New System, however, affording means of detection in the ships where the offences were committed: what were formerly misdemeanors are now treated as larcenies, which has operated most powerfully in breaking up this atrocious confederacy, and in defeating all the nefarious designs of the criminal delinquents of which it was formed, some of whom, although apparently common labourers, resided in handsome houses furnished in a very superior style for the rank in life of the occupiers.

As a proof, among many others, of the enormous extent of the River Plunder, the convictions for misdemeanors under the Act of the 2 Geo. 3. cap. 28. from August 1792 to August 1799, exceeded *two thousand two hundred*; of which number about 2000 culprits paid the penalty; partly from their own resourses, but chiefly, it is believed, from the funds of the club, amounting in all to about 4000*l*. in the course of seven years.

Coal

Coal Merchants have likewise sustained losses to a great amount annually, while every species of goods imported have been more or less subject to depredations.

Nor has the Export Trade on the River Thames been in any respect secured against the rapacity of this phalanx of plunderers. Many well-authenticated cases have recently been developed, which prove that Hamburgh vessels outward bound, have been plundered to a considerable amount,* particularly those which were laden with sugar, coffee, and other West India Produce. Outward-bound ships to every part of the world have also been more or less objects of plunder, to the numerous herds of delinquents who were employed upon the River, aided by their associates in iniquity, the Receivers.

To enter *into particulars*, or to detail specific instances, would far exceed the limits prescribed for this branch of the general catalogue of delinquency exhibited in this Tract. Suffice it to repeat, that the most satisfactory evidence can be adduced, that the system of depredation which had so long prevailed, and which had advanced with the growing Commerce of the Port, had pervaded every species of Merchan-

* A Shipmaster in the trade a few months since was compelled to pay 40*l.* for deficient ſugars plundered by Lumpers and others, who assisted in lading his vessel, notwithstanding his utmost personal vigilance and attention while the sugars were taking on board. A single Marine Police Officer would have prevented this. The effect of their power in overawing delinquents, from the nature of the system and the discipline peculiar to the inſtitution, is not to be conceived.

dize

dize laden or discharged, as well as the Tackle, Apparel and Stores of almost every ship and vessel arriving in, and departing from, the River Thames.

Nor can it be a matter of wonder, that such pervading mischiefs should have prevailed when it is known, that above 5000 individuals, employed in various stationary situations upon the River, have, with a very few exceptions, been nursed from early life in acts of delinquency of this nature.

In a group so extensive there are unquestionably many different shades of turpitude; but certain it is, that long habit, and general example, had banished from the minds of the mass of the culprits implicated in these offences, that sense of the criminality of the action, which attaches to every other species of theft.

SUCH was the situation of things in the Port of London, in the month of July 1798, when the MARINE POLICE INSTITUTION, a wise and salutary measure of Government,* arose from the meritorious exertions of the West India Merchants.

The object of this Establishment was to counteract these mischievous proceedings, and by salutary arrangements *in the Science of Police*, to prevent in future a repetition of those crimes which had so long

* For the establishment and steady support of this Institution, the Commerce of the Port of London is much indebted to His Grace the Duke of Portland, Secretary of State for the Home Department, and the Right Hon. William Pitt, Chancellor of the Exchequer.—To the Right Hon. Henry Dundas acknowledgements are also due, for having obligingly undertaken to bring forward the Thames Police Bill in the House of Commons.

contaminated the morals of the people, and operated as an evil of no small weight and magnitude on the Trade of the River Thames.

How far this System, *planned* and adapted to the exigencies of the case, and carried into effect by the Author of these pages, assisted by a very able and indefatigable Magistrate, and by many zealous and active Officers, has been productive of the benefits which were in contemplation, must be determined by an accurate examination of the state of delinquency, among the aquatic labourers and others, employed at present in ships and vessels in the River Thames; compared with what existed previous to this Establishment.

Although much yet remains to be done to prevent the renewal of those criminal proceedings, which have by great exertions been happily in many instances suppressed.—Although the Marine Police* has been unquestionably crippled by the want of those apposite *Legislative* Regulations, upon which its energy and utility, as a *permanent Establishment*, must, in a great measure depend, yet the proofs of the advantages which have resulted from it, not only to the West India Trade† (for the protection of which it was originally

* For a particular account of this Institution, see the "Treatise on the Commerce and Police of the River Thames," already alluded to.

† With respect to the advantages which have resulted in the aggregate, to the West India Planters and Merchants, from this New Institution, it is impossible to form any decided opinion; but estimating

originally instituted) but also to the whole Commerce and Navigation of the Port of London, are so decided and irrefragable, that specific details are unnecessary, especially since Deputations of the most respectable Merchants from the whole Commercial Body, sensible of the benefits derived from the system have solicited the sanction of Government, for the purpose of

estimating the savings, on an average, at 28*lbs.* of sugar per hhd. (which is only one half of what the Committee of West India Merchants, in their Report to a General Meeting in 1798, supposed the plunderage might have been formerly) it appears, upon this data, that the gain to the Planters, Merchants, and the Revenue, on a very reduced estimate as to the actual importation may be thus stated.—

	Saving to the Planters.	Saving to the Revenue.	Total.
On 115,000 casks of sugar, at 28*lbs.* per cask - - -	£.97,012	£.25,150	£.122,162
15,000 casks of rum, at three gallons each - - - - - -	9,000	15,000	24,000
Coffee, pimento, and other articles, suppose - - - -	5,000	10,000	15,000
Totals -	£.111,012	£.50,150	£.161,162

If credit is to be given to the general and specific proofs of the depredations which took place before the establishment of the Marine Police, and to the numerous documents which demonstrate the saving of property, which has been the effect of this system of prevention, the above estimate will not appear to be over-rated. In an importation amounting to above £.8,000,000 sterling a year, it is not too much to say that 1½ per cent. on this sum may have been saved under a system of such extreme vigilance, where every class of depredators were defeated in their iniquitous designs, and deprived in a great measure of the powers they formerly possessed, of doing mischief. The probability is, that it has amounted to more, though the fact never can be accurately ascertained.

passing

passing a Bill to extend the design, so as to afford the same protection to the general Trade of the Port, which has been experienced by the West India Planters and Merchants; * and requesting to be permitted to defray the expence by an annual assessment upon the Trade in general.

It may only be necessary in this place to state, that under all the disadvantages and difficulties attending the execution of this design, it may truly be said to have worked wonders in reforming the shocking abuses which prevailed.—*The River Pirates scarcely now exist in any shape.—The Nightly Plunderers, denominated Light Horsemen, have not dared in a single instance to pursue their criminal designs.—The Working Lumpers, denominated Heavy Horse, are no longer to be found loaded with plunder.*——Watermen are

* At a meeting of the Committee of the West India Merchants appointed to manage the general concerns of the Trade, held on the 4th of January 1799, It was

" Resolved,

" That this Committee are deeply impressed with a high sense of the singular advantages, which appear to have resulted to the Commerce of the Port of London in general, but particularly to the West India Planters and Merchants, in the protection afforded to their property by the exertions of *The Marine Police Institution*, as well as by the General System established for the prevention of pillage and plunder arising out of the measures for detection pursued by the Magistrates presiding at the Marine Police Office, by which, in the opinion of this Committee, great and extensive benefits have also resulted to his Majesty's Revenue."

not

not now as *formerly to be recognized in clusters hanging upon the bows and quarters of West India ships under discharge to receive plunder.*—Lightermen, *finding nothing to be procured by attending their craft, are accustomed to desert them until the period when they are completely laden.*—*Journeymen Coopers do not wilfully demolish casks and packages as heretofore, since no advantage is to be reaped from the spillings of sugar, coffee, or other articles.*—*The Mud-Larks find it no longer an object to prowl about ships at low water while under discharge, since the resourse for that species of iniquitous employment, which they were accustomed to solicit, is no longer in existence.*—*The criminal class of Revenue Officers, who had long profited (in many instances to an enormous extent) by the nefarious practices which prevailed, have not been able to suppress their rage against the New Police, by the vigilance of which they feel themselves deprived of the means of profiting by the system of plunder, which they had so perfectly organized, and which, in collusion with the Revenue Watermen, they were so well able to cover by availing themselves of their official situations, on many occasions, in protecting to the houses of the Receivers articles which were both stolen and smuggled.*

By means of a Police Guard upon the Quays, which forms a collateral branch of the General System, *the Scuffle-hunters and Long-apron-men, who were accustomed to prowl about for the purpose of pillage, have in a great measure deserted the quays and landing-places; while the Copemen and Receivers, finding*

ing from several examples which have been made, that their former infamous pursuits cannot be continued without the most imminent hazard, have, in many instances, declined business, while not a few of these mischievous members of society have quitted their former residences, and disappeared.

Such has been the effect of the remedy which has been applied towards the cure of the enormous evil of River Plunder.

It is not, however, to be understood that this System has entirely eradicated the pillage which prevailed, a circumstance not to be expected, since the design was partial and limited in its nature, and only intended for the protection of West India property, although very extensive benefits have unquestionably arisen from its collateral influence, and its energy, in terrifying thieves of every description upon the River, and diminishing the depredations, which, but for the dread of detection by means of the Police Boats in the night, would unquestionably have been committed.

But while it is readily admitted that amidst the opposite attractions of pleasure and pain, it is impossible to reduce the tumultuous activity of such a phalanx of individuals to absolute order and purity, who have been in many instances reared up in habits of delinquency: and while it is a vain hope to expect that crimes can be totally annihilated, where temptations assail the idle and the dissolute, and religion and morality, or even in many instances, the

fear

fear of punishment, does not operate as a restraint; —yet is it, notwithstanding, clear to demonstration, from the effects produced by the limited experiment which has been made, that the General Police for the River Thames which is in contemplation, aided by the apposite Legislative regulations which experience has suggested to be necessary,* must in its operation, under the guidance of an able and active Magistracy, so far diminish and keep down the depredations which were committed, as to prove scarce a drop in the bucket, when compared to the extensive and enormous evils which it has been the object of the promoters of this new System to suppress.

Although in this arduous pursuit, the Author of this Tract has experienced infinite difficulties and discouragements, yet is he stimulated to proceed by the consciousness that he is engaged in an undertaking in which the best interests of Society are involved:—Since by administering the Laws in conjunction with a very zealous, able, and humane Magistrate,† in a manner rather calculated to *restrain* than to *punish*,‡ a multitude of individuals, together with

* For the specific provisions of *the Thames Police Bill*, see the Appendix.

† John Harriott, Esq. the Resident Magistrate.

‡ So powerful was the effect of the Preventive System, whereever it was permitted to be applied, that no instance has occurred in the course of more than fifteen months, since the Marine Police was established, of sufficient grounds for a criminal prosecution having taken place by the commission of any Larceny or Felony in ships or craft under the immediate protection of the Institution.

a numerous offspring, are likely to be rendered useful members of the Body Politic, instead of nuisances in Society.—The advantages thus gained (although his labours have been in other respects gratuitous,) will, at least, reconcile him to the *dangers*, the *toils*, and the anxieties which have been experienced; and particularly, since in the accomplishment of this object, both the interests of *humanity* and *morality*, have been in no small degree promoted; for unquestionably, there cannot be a greater act of benevolence to mankind, in a course of *criminal delinquency*, than that which tends to *civilize their manners*;—*to teach them obedience to the* Laws;—*to screen themselves and their families from the evils and distress attendant on punishment, by preventing the commission of crimes*;—and *to lead them into the paths of honest industry, as the only means of securing that real comfort and happiness which a life of criminality, however productive of occasional supplies of money, can never bestow.*—If it shall be considered (as it certainly is) a glorious atchievement to subdue a powerful Army or Navy, and thereby secure the tranquillity of a State—is not the triumph in some degree analogous, where a numerous army of delinquents, carrying on a species of warfare no less noxious, if not equally hostile, shall not only be subdued by a mild and systematic direction of the powers of the Law; but that the conquered enemy shall be converted into an useful friend, adding strength instead of weakness to the Government of the country?

Such has been, at least, the result of the partial operations of the Marine Police; and such will unquestionably be the issue of the general measures which have been planned and arranged, when the *Key stone* shall be finally laid to the fabric, by passing into a Law the Bill which has been prepared for the extension of this design to the protection of the whole trade of the port of London.*

* As a proof of the approbation of the whole body of the West India Planters at the General Meeting, not only of the System of the Marine Police, but also of the Bill which has been prepared to extend its influence to the general trade of the River Thames, the following extracts are inserted:

Extract from the Minutes of a Meeting of a Committee of the West India Planters and Merchants—London, June 7, 1799.

"Resolved,

"That this Committee is fully convinced that considerable advantages have been derived from the institution of the Marine Police, in checking the depredations on West India produce on board ships in the River Thames; and consequently approves of the Bill for constituting the said *Marine Police*, with powers enlarged and more effective, and on a more extended plan, provided the Act for that purpose be in the first instance limited to the duration of three years, and that the whole expence of the Institution does not exceed Ten Thousand Pounds annually."

Extract from the Minutes of a General Meeting of the West India Planters, held by public Advertisement at Wright's Coffee-house, Soho-square, London, June 13, 1799.

The Right Honourable Lord PENRHYN in the Chair.

"Resolved,

"That this Meeting confirms the Report of its Committee, and approves of the project of a Bill for the purposes, and within the limitations stated in that Report.

"Resolved,

"That Lord Penrhyn be requested to present to the Chancellor of

of the Exchequer the Report of a Committee of this Meeting, on the subject of the Marine Police Institution, and the Resolution of this meeting approving the said Report.

" Resolved,

" That Lord Penrhyn be requested to communicate the thanks of this Meeting to Mr. Colquhoun for the zeal, ability, and perseverance with which he has endeavoured to form an effectual check to the system of depredation which prevailed on the River Thames."

In addition to the approbation of the West India Planters and Merchants thus detailed, it may be necessary to state, that in consequence of a proposition submitted by the latter, to the consideration of the different Trading bodies and Ship Owners in the Metropolis, (on the 8th January, 1779,) for the purpose of extending the protection of the Thames Police to the whole Commerce of the River, and raising a very small Tonnage duty (in the proportion of $\frac{5}{6}$th parts on Goods, and $\frac{1}{6}$th on Ships) for its support; several Meetings* were held, composed of the most respectable Merchants and Ship Owners in the City of London, representing the chief part of the Traders in all the different branches of Commerce carried on to and from the River Thames; who having unanimously approved of the measure of a *General Police*, and also of the Bill which was submitted to their consideration; (and of which a summary view is given in the Appendix;) appointed a Committee of three Members, (of which, Edward Forster, Esq. Governor of the Ruſſia Company, was Chairman;) to wait upon His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State, for the purpose of obtaining the consent of Government that the Bill might pass into a Law; and as its utility has been clearly demonstrated, and the rights and privileges of the City of London not only unequivocally preserved by specific Clauses, but every possible objection anticipated and removed, great hopes are entertained that it will receive the sanction of the Legislature during the present Session of Parliament: Since assurances have been given, proceeding from the highest authority, that Government will bring forward the measure from a perfect conviction of its necessity and utility.

* The first Meeting was held on the 12th March, 1799, when it was unanimously resolved, That a Deputation, consisting of Edward Forster, Esq. Beeston Long, Esq. and Robert Thornton, Esq. should be authorized to wait on his Grace the Duke of Portland, " to submit to his consideration the importance of extending the

" influence

" influence of the Marine Police to the General Trade of the Port " of London, and the necessity of passing a Bill through Parliament " to give effect to the Marine Police, by establishing certain " Duties and Regulations."

Subsequent Meetings were held on the 30th May, and the 5th July, 1799.—The Gentlemen who attended in behalf of the different trading Bodies were these following:

East-India Company - - - - -	Abraham Robarts, Esq.
West-India Merchants - - - - -	Beeston Long, Esq.
Russia Merchants, &c. - - - - -	Edward Forster, Esq. Robert Thornton, Esq. Thomson Bonar, Esq.
Mediterranean Trade, &c. - -	John Turnbull, Esq.
Turkey Trade - - - - - - -	John Dunnage, Esq.
Canada Trade, &c. - - - - - -	John Brickwood, Esq.
United States of America - - -	Philip Sansom, Esq.
Ship Owners - - - - - - -	Robert Curling, Esq.

APPENDIX.

NUMBER I.

Summary View of a BILL *for the more effectual* PREVENTION *of* DEPREDATIONS *on the River* THAMES.

THE *Act* (2 Geo. III. c. 28.) to prevent the committing of thefts and frauds by persons navigating bumboats and other boats on the River Thames, was passed in 1762:—Nothing was done under it for about 14 years. The present temporary *Marine Police Office* had no other special ground for its proceeding than that Act, which, though *conducive* to its object as far as it goes, has been shewn, by fifteen months' experience, to be far indeed from *adequate*. What the Act contributes, is confined to *penalties* and *legal powers*. The *Office* furnishes *civil Guards*, properly equipped and armed, for the execution of those powers. The expence of these Guards being defrayed exclusively by a single branch of the trade, (viz. the West-India,) out of 23 and more that may be distinguished,* the *immediate* effects of the protection afforded by them, have of course been confined to that single branch of trade.

* See Table in page 46.

To

To substitute, to this *scanty* and *occasional detachment*, a more *permanent* as well as *stronger* force, commensurate, in point of *numbers* as well as *funds*, to the extent of the demand as furnished by the whole *Trade*, (not to speak of *his Majesty's* floating property,) is *one* main object of this Bill :—to give the requisite extension to those penalties and those powers, is *the other*. From what *has been* done with such *in*-adequate means, as well as under numerous disadvantages, what *would be* done with *adequate* means, *legal* as well as *pecuniary*, may be inferred.—How much the existing system *wants*, may be seen by what the present Bill *supplies*.

In proportion as *the following sketch* is *summary*, the wording could not but be *loose :* but in the *Bill itself*, nothing can exceed in point of anxiety, the care that has been taken for the security of innocence, and for divesting power of the faculty of abuse.

If explanations of the *grounds* of the Bill, in point of *reason* and *experience*, be desired, they may be found, in a degree of detail rather beyond what is *most* customary, in the Preambles by which several of the Sections are introduced.

I. General Preamble.—Power to his Majesty to establish a Police Office, at or near Wapping New Stairs, under the name of the THAMES POLICE-OFFICE. Three Justices, (two of them to sit constantly,) with *special powers* herein-after mentioned, under the name of *Special Justices*, (§ 1.)

Provisions

Provisions of the existing Police Act, 32 Geo. III. c. 53. extended, as far as applicable, to this Office, (§ 2.)

II. Power to Special Justices to appoint, suspend, and dismiss, divers sets of Constables, viz. 1. *Office Constables* for *Land-service*, as in the existing Police Offices, (§ 3.) 2. *Boat-Constables*, for patroling the River in boats. 3. *Ship-Constables*, to be attached to ships during the unloading, &c. on application by persons interested. 4. *Surveyors*, with the powers of Constables, for inspecting and directing the other Constables. Power to the *Lord Mayor and Aldermen*, as also to the *Trinity House*, to *dismiss* any of these Constables. (§ 3 & 4.)

III. For defraying all such expences of the Establishment, as are over and above the expences of the other Police Offices, (the Fund for that purpose being distinguished by the Name of *The Office Fund)* a peculiar Fund, under the Name of *The Thames Police Guard Fund*; to be raised by a set of *Tonnage Duties*, imposed on the several classes of persons benefited, in specified proportions adjusted to the several degrees of benefit. (§ 5, 9, 10, 11.) Payment secured, by refusal of *Clearance* until a proper *Certificate* of payment be produced. (§ 14.) Sum raised not to *exceed* 10,000*l.* per annum,* but to be *reducible* to any amount. (§ 9.)

For

* On the present Importation and Exportation of Sixty Millions sterling, on Merchandize imported and exported, the whole burden

upon

For this, and other purposes, a set of Commissioners, termed *The Thames Police Fund Commissioners*, to be chosen, one out of each of about 23 classes of persons contributing to the Fund. (§ 5, 6.) Organization of the body of Commissioners—Provision for ensuring the attendance of different *numbers*, competent to different *purposes* —Meetings, general and special.—Adjournments —Quorums sufficient—Chairmen—Casting Votes, (§ 7.)—*Vacant* seats to be filled up by the Commissioners themselves, out of the *class* in which the vacancy takes place. (§ 8.) For necessary *supplies*, Meetings may be called by the Special Justices. (§ 13.) Powers for appointing subordinates, viz: *Collector*, *Treasurer*, *Cashier*, and *Auditors*; the Auditors, out of their own number, and unpaid.—Powers to Auditors for examining upon Oath. (§ 12.) For manifest unfitness, a Commissioner may be *suspended* by his brethren; and, on *their* representation, *dismissed* by King in *Council*. (§ 51.)

upon the Trade and Shipping to raise 10,000*l.* a year, will be only 4*d.* per *cent.* on an average, to be divided thus :—

	Goods.	Ships.
On Imports	2d.	$\frac{1}{3}$d.
On Exports	1$\frac{1}{3}$d.	$\frac{1}{3}$d.
	3$\frac{1}{3}$d.	$\frac{2}{3}$d.—Total—4*d.* per 100*l.* for security.

[See Appendix, No. II.]

IV. Pro-

IV. Provisions for securing the good behaviour of *Working Lumpers*, (labourers employed in the loading and unloading of ships,) and their *Masters*.—The *Master Lumpers* not to act without a *licence* granted by the above Commissioners, or the Special Justices.—Licence discretionary, as in case of Alehouses. (§ 15.) *Working* Lumpers, not without being *registered*. (§ 16.) Working Lumpers, *quitting work*, punishable as other *labourers* are, under 6 Geo. II. c. 25. (§ 18.) Power to Commissioners to make regulations for the government of Lumpers. (§ 19.) Lumpers' *contracts*, as particularized under heads, to be *registered* at the Office, for the purpose of ascertaining the *conditions* of the engagement, thereby *preventing disputes*, and rendering the parties *responsible* and *forth-coming*. (§ 20.) Special Justices to be furnished with the names and abodes of the Lumpers employed on board each ship; as also of the Coopers, Watermen, and Lightermen. (§ 21.)

V. Power to Commissioners for making certain regulations relative to *apparel*, by prohibiting habiliments contrived, as at present, for secreting plunder; and for establishing distinctions visible at a distance, between persons *having business* on the spot, and persons *not* having business; and between persons *in authority*, and persons *not* in authority. (§ 17.)

VI. Provisions specially applied to *ships*.—Ship-Constables to be stationed by the Special Justices, on certain

certain terms, at the instance of Owners or Consignees (§ 23.) No person to be *charged for* as a Watchman, who has not been *sworn in* as a Ship-Constable :—Any *fit* person recommended by the Ship's Husband, *shall* be made a Ship-Constable, (§ 48.) Powers to the above Surveyors, for *visiting* ships, *directing* the Ship-Constables, and *inspecting* the conduct of Lumpers, Coopers, &c. (§ 24.) Ship-Master to keep fastened up all the Avenues to the Hold, but one ; and that too, when goods are not discharging (§ 22.) *Powers* to the Ship Masters and *Master* Lumpers for searching *Working* Lumpers: Master Lumpers *bound* so to do, under a penalty, besides responsibility for specific loss. (§ 25.) Powers to Commissioners, at the instance of Owners and Consignees, to appoint *Ship Inspectors* for *saving spillings*, *drainings*, &c. and thereby *preventing wilful waste*, (§ 31.) General Powers to Commissioners to make regulations relative to the shipping, unloading, landing, warehousing, and sampling goods, for the prevention of *waste*, *accident*, and *drepredation*. Power to King in *Council*, at the instance of the *Lord Mayor and Aldermen*, the *Treasury Board*, or the *Board of Customs*, to *annul* such regulations. (§ 49.)

VII. Provisions specially applied to *Wharfs* and *Warehouses*, in respect to *landing*, *removing*, *sampling*, &c. Powers to the Commissioners, for appointing *Wharf Inspectors*, with the powers of Constables;

bles; also, at the instance of Owners and Consignees, *Warehouse Inspectors*, (§ 30.) Slight penalty, inflictable by summary procedure, for injuring packages, and letting out their contents, *for the purpose of profiting by the waste.* (§ 28.)

VIII. Provisions authorizing *slight* penalties, inflictable by summary procedure, on *circumstantial* evidence, aided by the *examination* of the delinquent, as under the *Bumboat* Act, and *Stolen-metal* Act, where, on *regular* proof, it would be *felony*; and for attaching upon the practice of depredation, in such stages of its progress, as are *previous* or *subsequent* to the felonious act.—Misdemeanor to have *concealed* Instruments for drawing off Liquors. (§ 32.) Misdemeanor to throw goods *overboard* to prevent discovery:—when it is from a *boat*, Power for apprehending the *crew*. (§ 34.)

IX. Powers of search, seizure, and arrest, exercisable *on View*, on suspicion of petty thefts committed in ships, lighters, boats, &c. landing places, and warehouses. The offence punishable, as a misdemeanor, with a slight penalty, as above. (§ 33.)

X. Powers of search, &c. *on oath of suspicion*, at a supposed Receiver's. The offence, in default of *regular* proof, punishable as a *misdemeanor*.—The Bumboat Act amended in this behalf. (§ 33, 43.) Powers for tracing suspected goods through any *number* of hands;—another amendment of the Bumboat Act. (§ 37.) Penalty for fabricating false *Bills of Parcels*, to cover suspected goods. (§ 36.)

(§ 36.) *Receivers*, not *authorized* merely, but *bound*, under a slight penalty, to *stop* persons bringing (ship) goods to them, under *suspicious* circumstances, (§ 38.) To render the criminal intercourse dangerous on *both* sides, indemnity to *Thieves*, convicting *Receivers* of felony or misdemeanor, as the case may be. (§ 39.)

XI. Provision for preventing the carrying off entire *lighters* with their cargoes, (a frequent offence.)—Commissioners may appoint *Tickets*, the want of which shall be a ground of *suspicion*, warranting Constables to search, &c. a Lighter navigated at *suspicious hours*, (§ 27.)

XII. Special Provision in regard to *Coals*.—Misdemeanor to carry off Coals from Ships, &c. otherwise than in the course of trade; or to suffer them to be carried off. This, besides theft, prevents Coal-heavers from being paid in Coals, at the expence of the duty. Powers of Arrest, &c. (§ 26.)

XIII. Provisions for *preventing obstruction*, and *ensuring assistance* to the *execution* of the law in this behalf.—Penalty for *suppression of evidence*—or other obstruction. *Severer* Penalty, if with *force*. (§ 44.) Penalties for destroying or injuring Office-boats. (§ 45.) Persons *in general* bound to assist Constables, not only *on command*, but, in case of need, *without* command. (§ 42.)

XIV. Penalties, and application thereof, (§ 40.) Procedure summary; no appeal, nor certiorari. (§ 41.)

XV. Further

XV. Further amendment of the Bumboat Act.—Offences against *that* Act punishable either *as such*, or *as* against *this* Act. (§ 46.) Boats, which, under that Act, are *destroyed*; may either be destroyed, or sold, or restored, on *terms*. (§ 43.) *Misdemeanors*, which, under that Act, are offences transportable for 14 years, deemed *felonies*;—that the *procedure* may be *prompt*, as in felonies, instead of *dilatory*, as in misdemeanors. (§ 46.)

XVI. Formal Clauses.—*London* Privileges saved.—Limitation of Actions.—General Issue.—Treble Costs.—This a Public Act. (§ 52, 53.) Duration limited to *Three Years*.

Appendix. Number II.

The following Table of Tonnage Dues (extracted from the *Treatise on the Commerce and Police of the River Thames)* exhibits the proportion of the expence, which will fall on each branch of trade, according to rates which have been proposed; having had regard in apportioning the same to the *extent of the Tonnage, the value of the Property, and the degree of Risque*, applicable to the respective trades as nearly as a judgment could be formed, with a view to an equitable distribution of the expence, in proportion to the protection against depredation and plunder, which may be expected to be derived. It is, however, subject to such alterations and modifications as the Committee, appointed by those who are to contribute to this expence, may think fit. As the sum can never exceed

exceed ten thousand pounds a year, *fourpence per hundred pound*, will probably be the full extent of the average burden, unless the Trade of the Port shall decline :—And it would not be difficult to demonstrate, that even this inconsiderable and trifling expence will scarcely operate as a burden at all, since perhaps an equal sum will be saved, which is now incurred by *private watching*, independent of other obvious gains.—[*See page* 47.]—When fully examined, it will be found to be the most œconomical mode that ever was adopted, to secure and protect Commercial Property on the River Thames.

TABLE OF TONNAGE DUES,

For raising a fund applicable to Police purposes, calculated on the Importation and Exportation of the Port of London, for the year ending January 5, 1798.

In round Numbers.

Specification of different Trades.	Value of Imports.	Value of Exports.	Total value of imports and exports	No. of Ships.	Tons.	Rates.	Total to be paid by each branch of Trade.
	£.	£.	£.			d.	£. s. d.
East Indies	6,544,000	3,958,000	10,502,000	53	41,466	6	1036 8 0
West Indies	7,118,000	3,895,000	11,013,000	346	101,484	6	2537 2 0
Brit. Continent. Colonies	291,000	1,347,000	1,638,000	68	13,986	5	293 7 6
Africa and the Cape	82,000	449,000	531,000	17	4,336	4	72 5 4
Southern Fishery	250,000	[54]	250,000	29	7,461	2	62 3 6
Greenland Fishery	64,000	. . . . .	64,000	16	4,769	1	19 17 5
United States of America	1,517,000	3,899,000	5,416,000	140	32,213	5	671 2 1
Mediterranean & Turkey	390,000	119,000	509,000	72	14,757	4	245 9 0
Spain	776,000	171,000	947,000	121	16,509	4	275 3 0
Portugal	414,000	439,000	853,000	180	27,670	3	345 17 6
France	16,000	860,000	876,000	56	5,573	4	97 17 8
Austrian Flanders	21,000	118,000	139,000	66	5,104	2	42 10 8
Holland	673,000	1,538,000	2,211,000	329	19,166	2	159 14 4
Germany	2,658,000	8,014,000	10,672,000	235	37,647	5	784 6 3
Prussia	221,000	211,000	432,000	608	56,955	1½	355 19 4
Poland	207,000	35,000	242,000	69	17,210	2	143 8 4
Sweden	153,000	169,000	322,000	109	14,252	3	178 3 0
Denmark and Norway	95,000	711,000	806,000	202	48,469	2	403 18 2
Russia	1,565,000	452,000	2,017,000	230	56,131	3	701 12 9
Guernsey, Jersey, &c.	219,000	83,000	302,000	46	5,344	2	44 10 8
Ireland	1,879,000	660,000	2,539,000	276	32,824	2	273 10 8
Coasting Trade	4,100,000	2,500,000	6,600,000	6,500	560,000	¼	583 6 8
Coal Trade	1,700,000	10,000	1,710,000	3,676	656,000	¼	683 6 8
	30,953,000	29,638,000	60,591,000	13,444	1,779,326		10,011 0 6

Of this aggregate ½ or three-sixths is proposed to be raised on Imports 5000 0 0
⅓ or two-sixths . . . . . on Exports 3333 6 8
one-sixth . . . . . on Shipping 1666 13 4
10,000 0 0

APPENDIX. NUMBER III.

FOR the purpose of elucidating the subject still more, as it relates to the expence to be borne by each branch of Commerce, and the shipping concerns in the Port of London, the following Estimate of the aggregate losses suffered annually by these respective Trades, and by Ship Owners, is extracted from the new *Treatise on the Commerce and Police of the River Thames*, as the result of a detailed investigation of the depredations to which each class is presumed to be exposed, and which is minutely explained in that Work, and from this arises a general—

RECAPITULATION:

Exhibiting in one view the Foreign and Coasting Trade of the River Thames—The tonnage—Number of Packages—Value of goods imported, and exported—and the estimated plunder on each branch of Trade—calculated on the imports and exports of the year ending January 5, 1798.

	Specification of the different Trades.	Ships. Foreign	Ships. British	Tons including the repeated voyages.	Estimate of the number of Packages out & home	Total value of Imports, & Exports. £.	Estimated amount of Plunder on each branch. £.
1	East Indies	3	50	41,466	300,000	10,502,000	25,000
2	West Indies	11	335	101,484	400,000	11,013,000	232,000
3	British American Colonies	....	68	13,986	65,000	1,638,000	10,000
4	Africa and the Cape of Good Hope	....	17	4,336	20,000	531,000	2,500
5	Northern & Southern Fishery	....	45	12,230	20,000	314,000	2,000
6	United States of America	140	....	32,213	260,000	5,416,000	30,000
7	Mediterranean and Turkey	29	43	14,757	70,000	509,000	7,000
8	Spain and the Canaries	119	2	16,509	60,000	947,000	10,000
9	France and Auſtrian Netherlands	121	1	10,677	20,000	1,015,000	10,000
10	Portugal and Madeira	55	125	27,670	50,000	853,000	8,000
11	Holland	329	....	19,166	60,000	2,211,000	10,000
12	Germany	172	63	37,647	240,000	10,672,000	25,000
13	Prussia	527	81	56,955	60,000	432,000	10,000
14	Poland	31	38	17,210	70,000	242,000	5,000
15	Sweden	100	9	14,252	50,000	322,000	3,000
16	Denmark	194	8	48,469	60,000	806,000	5,000
17	Russia	5	225	56,131	150,000	2,017,000	20,000
18	Guernsey, Jersey, Alderney, & the Isle of Man	4	42	5,344	15,000	302,000	2,000
19	Ireland	3	273	32,824	160,000	2,539,000	5,000
20	Coaſting Trade	....	6,500	560,000	900,000	6,600,000	20,000
21	Coal Trade	....	3,676	656,000	.....	1,710,000	20,000
		1843	11,601	1,779,326	3,030,000	60,591,000	
22	Ship Owners 13,444 Ships and Vessels	Estimated annual loss in Tackle, Apparel, and Stores					45,000
		Total depredations est mated at £.					506,000

It would appear to be only necessary to examine this Table, in order to be convinced of the importance of a River Police even in a *pecuniary point* of view alone, independent of all other considerations connected with the morals of the people, or the general interest of society.

The actual expence (being only at the rate of fourpence per hundred pounds on the floating property) when opposed to the present burden of watching, which will be saved, and to the still greater savings which will arise from an effectual and uniform system of River Police, extending its protection to every species of floating property, without distinction, cannot be made an argument: for although in the estimate which is now given of the depredations, applicable to each branch of Trade, perfect accuracy is not to be expected; yet there are but too many proofs of the general prevalence of this evil, to admit of a doubt of its having existed even to a greater extent in the aggregate than is exhibited in this estimate: if, therefore, the plan, which is proposed, is to secure this property to its Owners, instead of the proposed rates operating as a burden, they must be productive of a great and solid profit to every individual concerned in the Trade of the River Thames.

THE END.

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